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BOOK REVIEWS

City Government for Young People. By CHARLES DWIGHT WILLARD. New York : The Macmillan Co., 1906.

In 1800 about one-thirtieth of the people of the United States were living within cities having a population of 8,000 or more; in 1900 the proportion had increased to about one-third. Within a few years, if present indications do not fail, more than half of the inhabitants of this country will be living under the jurisdiction of the municipal corporations. It is not strange, therefore, that the subject of city government is receiving at the present time a large amount of attention from students of sociology, economics, and politics.

City Government for Young People, published recently by The Macmillan Co., is a timely contribution in this field; not that it solves, or attempts to solve, any of the perplexing problems of city government, but because it aims to help young people to a knowledge of the facts of the subject which may serve as a basis for intelligent thinking and as an inspiration to greater activity in city affairs. The book is but an outline of municipal government attempting to bring out only those general features found in nearly all American cities. The details of municipal government are so different in different cities, and change so rapidly even in the same city, that it would be impracticable to attempt to deal with them in a single small volume. They may be studied best for any individual city in the charter, ordinances, and reports of the various departments of that city. But this little book is an excellent guide in such studies.

It first traces the growth of cities in size and influence. The relation of the city to the state is then set forth. Then follows the *work* of the city discussed under two general heads, what the city does for itself, and what it does for its citizens. Under the first topic we study the machinery of the city government, the council, the mayor, and the various city departments, and under the second head the real functions of the city, the services which it renders to the individual and to society.

A healthful optimism pervades all the pages of this book. At times, indeed, this optimistic spirit is almost too pronounced; it might almost convince the conscientious political reformer that his calling was no longer a necessary or useful one. We miss, too, at the end of the chapter the familiar "suggestive questions and exercises," and the dignified "bibliographies" which always look well in a textbook and are sometimes used. But the author has sought to make some amends for this omission by tucking away in the back of the book a chapter "To the Instructor," a short but carefully selected list of books dealing with various phases of municipal government, and a batch of quite interesting notes.

Teachers who appreciate the importance of the subject and are trying to equip their pupils with a working knowledge of the institutions of the city in which they live will find this a very helpful book.

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